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Submitted for immediate release by:

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YMCA Gymnasts Win State Meet

Patricia Davis, Kendra Benak and Francie Flores finished their Level 7 gymnastics season in style, winning individual all-around championships in their respective divisions.

For Davis, the road to the gold medal was an uphill climb, mirroring the challenges she faced for a good portion of the regular season, sidelined like her twin sister Amy with an injury.

"Two months ago A&P [Amy and Patricia Davis] were both sure they would not be able to compete at state," said YMCA gym supervisor Betsy Van Deinse. "But their dad, Brian, said, 'They'll be ready. Sign 'em up,' and he was right!"

Davis began the meet with a respectable 9.35 vault. Respectable, but only good enough for 16th place. Already at the start of just the second event of the day, the dream of coming back from a mid-season injury to capture a state crown seemed impossible. But on bars Davis improved to third place, and with identical 9.55 first place beam and floor routines, her all-around score of 37.25 was six tenths higher than her next nearest competitor. She had won gold against all odds.

For Flores the final margin of victory was much closer (less than two tenths), but her championship fate was sealed early. She began her meet with first place beam and floor routines, posting scores of 9.575 and 9.7. After a slight dip with an 8th place vault, Flores bounced back to championship form with a 9.475 bars score to give her a 38.125 all-around individual gold medal.

Kendra Benak's vault put her into ninth place for that event, but with a win on beam and a beautiful 9.675 first place floor routine, her 38.125

all-around score held up for the championship. Benak finished the year with a flawless record on floor, winning gold in that event at every meet this season.

“We were the only team in the state with three individual all-around champions,” beamed coach Gina Van Deinse, adding, “We competed in three age divisions and came out with an individual all-around champion in each one.”

Annie Gerstner also competed for the YMCA’s Level 7 team, turning in a second place floor performance, a second place 9.625 vault score (awarded third place due to a tie), and a seventh place bars routine. Her scores helped the YMCA team capture third place all-around, and win the team competition on floor.

“Annie and Francie have placed first and second in the all-around scoring all season, and Annie has been recognized as the most powerful vaulter in the state over the past few years,” confided coach Jennifer Van Deinse. “She had a hard time recovering from an uncharacteristic fall on beam, and it may have affected her vault at state, but she will be tough to beat next year.”

With a record-setting 10 gold medal performances at this year’s Level 7 state meet, and 14 gold medals with three all-around individual championships all together, “tough to beat” is a good prediction for the YMCA’s whole team next season.